

# Aberdeen in the Twentieth Century

By Lord Provost EDWARD W. WATT, M.A.

At the opening of the Twentieth Century Mr. William Watt communicated to this Society a paper on "Fifty Years' Progress in Aberdeen." This year the Aberdeen Philosophical Society is celebrating the centenary of its foundation, and it has been considered appropriate that son should follow father in making a brief survey of the development of our city.

We are approaching the end of the fourth decade of the Twentieth century. Are the average conditions of life in Aberdeen to-day better than they were at the beginning of the century? They are, at least, very different. The Great War worked a great change. The world is still disturbed. Wars are still being waged. Rumours of a war in which we may be involved have been foremost in our thoughts. The immediate danger has passed, but the spectre of war has not been laid. The nation is spending huge sums on rearmament. We are all being drilled in Air Raid Precautions, and the most elaborate arrangements are being made to cope with the horrors of a bombardment from the air. This, however, is only one aspect of the situation, and we hope it may pass.

The century has seen wonderful developments which go far beyond the imagination of the people of last century, and, amidst all these, the innate qualities of the Aberdonian, as in earlier times, have served to keep Aberdeen in the van of progress.

Those of us who are old enough to remember the beginning of the century must be impressed by the transformation that has taken place. The younger generation has been born into a new world. They accept it as a matter of course, but their fathers and grandfathers have memories of a very different state of affairs. Manners and customs, conditions of labour, facilities for the use of leisure, environment, in the most comprehensive sense of the term, have all changed.

A walk down Union Street to-day is a very different experience from what it was in 1900. There were trams then, as now, but in



Edw. Watt.

tramway service was completed in 1902, and the last run of a horse-drawn car took place on the circular route on May 21 of that year, which, it may be observed, saw the introduction of Sunday cars. That was an innovation which seriously perturbed some good people who strenuously refused to use them. I doubt very much whether anybody to-day takes up that attitude. We still have an excellent tramway service, but the writing is on the wall. A rival has appeared in the motor bus, and the latest accounts of the Transport Department show that the traffic revenue from buses exceeds that from the tramways by £10,000, though the working expenses of the latter are lower than those of the former. Two tramway services—Tany and Perryhill—have been replaced by bus services in recent years, and the suburban tramway services, conducted by private enterprise, have also been given up, unable to compete with more up-to-date forms of transport. The Town Council have powers to discontinue tramcars altogether and to substitute trolley vehicles.

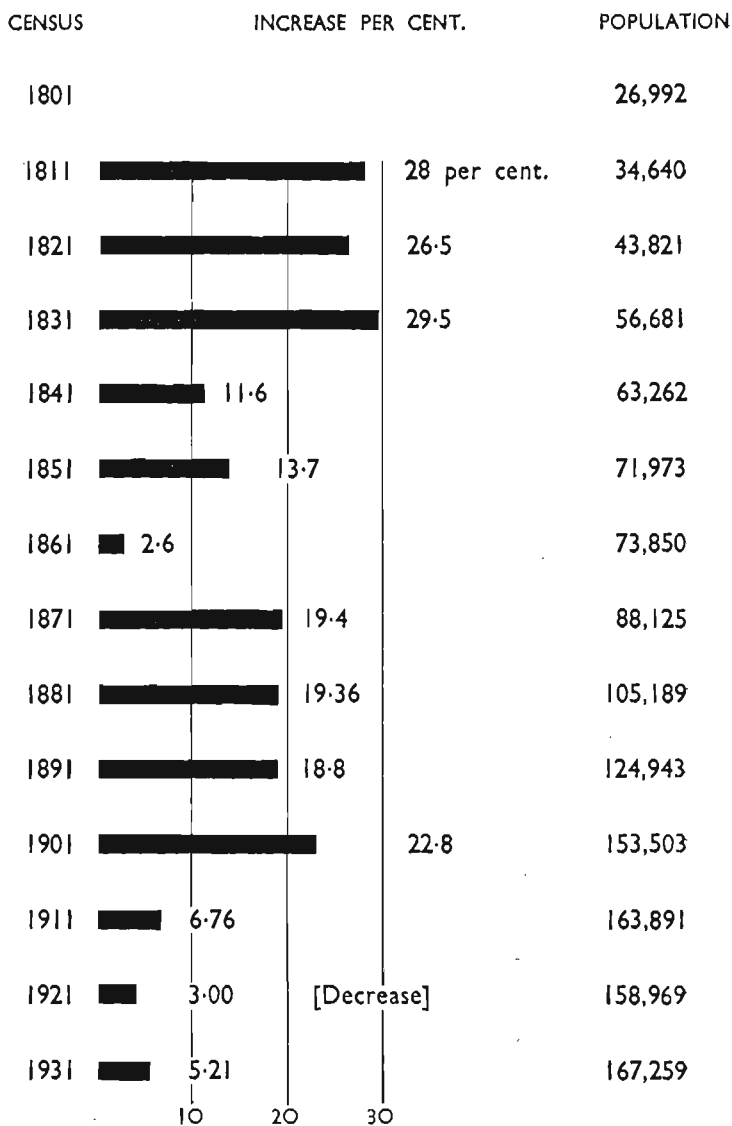
Our Union Street pedestrian, who probably would not keep to the left, would observe many other things. He would be impressed by the density of the motor traffic. He would see a constant stream of motor vehicles. He would notice cars parked along both sides of the street, and he would find it very difficult to cross safely, unless he conformed to the traffic lights or used the Belisha crossings. This is not a new problem. It will be remembered that when the widening of Union Bridge was under discussion, strenuous opposition was offered by a well-known Aberdeenshire laird because, as he contended, the old narrow bridge was the only part of Union Street where he had a chance of getting safely across. Other changes in Union Street would be very obvious to our pedestrian. On the south side the last of the snail areas has disappeared and the last private dwelling-house has become a shop. Office blocks and cinemas have replaced many of the old buildings, shop fronts have been modernised, gasopes and neon lighting have been introduced, the public lighting of the street has been greatly improved. All these changes have emphasised another change—the disappointment, to a considerable extent, of the local shopkeeper. Multiple firms have bought him up, perhaps retaining the old name but exercising the control, or they have squeezed him out by their competition.

The city has largely extended its boundaries, and its population

has grown to a figure which, according to the Registrar-General's estimate, puts Aberdeen now in the third place among the four large cities of Scotland. The following table gives a comparison of the populations of Aberdeen and Dundee up to the 1931 census, and the next table shows the percentage change in the case of Aberdeen. It will be noted that in the decade which ended in 1921, and included the war years and the beginning of the post-war depression, Aberdeen's population decreased by 3 per cent. In the next decade there was a recovery, with an increase of 5.21 per cent. The actual position now will not be known until we have the census of 1941, but the Registrar-General's estimate to the middle of 1938 (provisional) gives Aberdeen a population of 178,200, an increase of 6.18 per cent. since 1931, and Dundee's population is put at 177,600, an increase of little more than 1 per cent. A century ago Aberdeen shot ahead of Dundee and "was considerably the larger town." Is the same process to be repeated? The main causes which account for the changes are clear. They were described in Mr. Watt's paper and to a large extent they still operate. Dundee depends mainly on the jute trade, and that trade is in a very depressed condition. Aberdeen has a variety of industries and, though depression affects them more or less, the general result is not so serious as in the case of Dundee, where the full force of bad times falls on one industry. Aberdeen, too, gained through the extension of its boundaries in 1934, and there is another factor whose influence cannot be fully assessed, but which has had its effect, and that is immigration from the surrounding country districts and from abroad. The records of the Corporation Housing Department supply evidence of this. Depression in the Dominions and Colonies has sent Aberdonians home, and the hope of getting a house and work, or the more generous scale of public assistance which prevails in the city as compared with the country districts, has had its attraction.

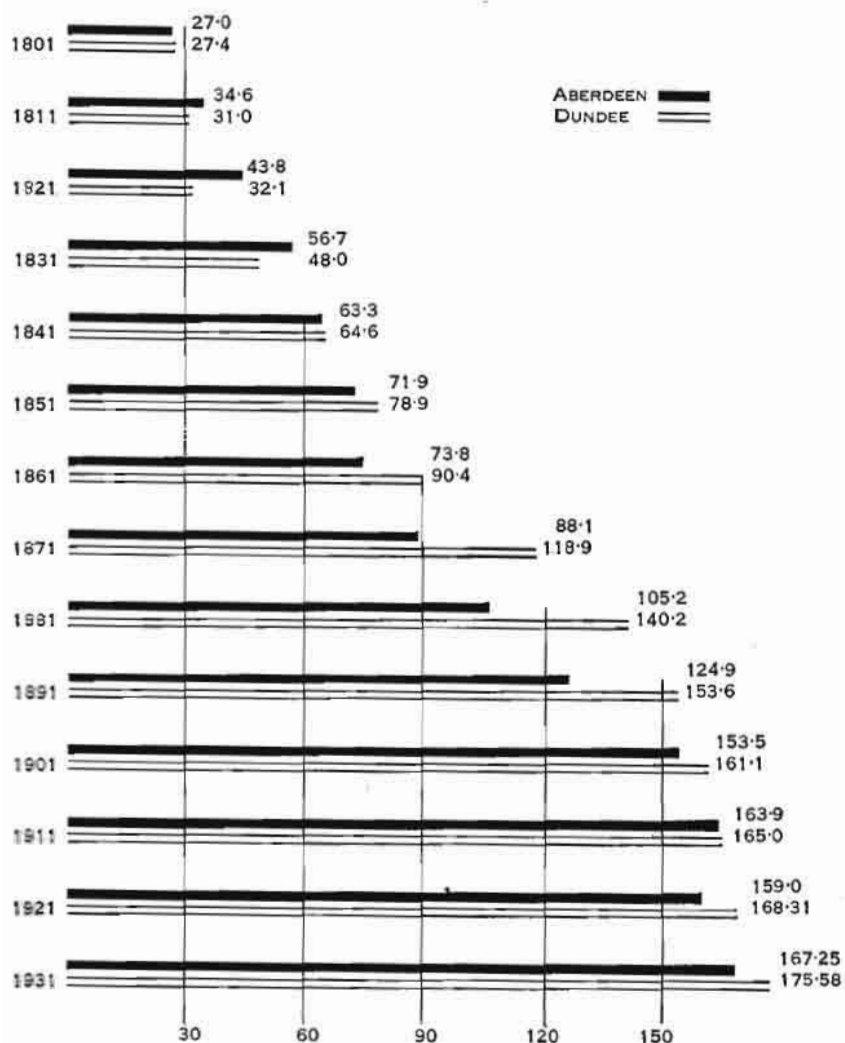
Another important factor that has to be considered in dealing with the population figures is the gross reproduction rate. This has been carefully analysed by Dr. Enid Charles in a paper communicated by Professor Hogben to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. In 1911 Aberdeen had a higher rate than Dundee, the figures being 1.481 as against 1.374. Twenty years later the position was reversed. In both cities the rate had fallen, but to a lesser extent in Dundee than in Aberdeen. The Dundee figure was 1.075, a

## POPULATION OF ABERDEEN



## ABERDEEN AND DUNDEE

### POPULATION 1801-1931 [IN THOUSANDS]



decrease of ·299, and the Aberdeen figure was 1·070, a decrease of ·411.

The making of the modern city has been said to have begun with the early 19th century. Important developments have followed from time to time, and two that promise to do much for amenity and progress have come in the last five years. I refer to the Aberdeen and District Joint Town Planning Scheme 1933, and the Aberdeen Corporation Order 1934, which authorised the extension of the boundaries.

The Town Planning Scheme was promoted by the Aberdeen and District Joint Town Planning Committee, which was a Statutory Committee under the Town Planning (Scotland) Act 1925, and consisted of six members from the Town Council of Aberdeen, three from the County Council of Aberdeenshire, and two from the County Council of Kincardine. The area dealt with extended to almost 97 square miles and embraced the parishes of Newhills, Dyce, Oldmachar, Peterculter and a part of the parish of Newmachar, lying east of the river Don, in Aberdeenshire, the parishes of Nigg, Banchory-Devenick, and Maryculter in the county of Kincardine, and generally speaking that portion of the city lying west of Queen's Cross. The idea of the plan was a bold conception. Aberdeen had suffered in the past from uncontrolled development, although tribute must be paid to the enlightened planning of the Incorporated Trades and the City of Aberdeen Land Association in the last century. The new Scheme introduced method and order. It made provision for roads, the zoning of building areas, the preservation of open spaces and the preservation of objects of historical interest and amenity. The ready co-operation of proprietors was obtained and the whole project was carried out in a most harmonious way, largely through the tact and persuasive powers of the convener of the Joint Committee, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Henry Alexander.

In 1899 the city was constituted a county with its own Lord-Lieutenant, the Lord Provost. The extension of 1891 added an area of 4,167 acres, and 34 years later the order of 1934 added an area of 4,273 acres, with a population of 2,740. In addition, the city annexed an area of the North Sea, extending one nautical mile from high water mark, *ex adverso* the city as extended landwards. This sea area covers 3,280 acres. The gross valuation of the added area is £41,010. At the beginning of last century the area of the

city was about  $10\frac{1}{2}$  square miles, and it was stated that although the "unoccupied ground is rapidly becoming less and less, it is not likely to be anything like completely built upon in our time." That was a forecast which has not been fulfilled. In spite of the recent large extension of the city the difficulty that faces the Town Council to-day is the difficulty of getting suitable sites. Already all available ground near the centre of the city has been taken and big building operations are being carried out or planned on the fringes, including the estate of Kincorth on the south bank of the Dee. The area of the city is now 11,021 acres, excluding the sea, or 17.22 square miles.

The rehousing of the population has been perhaps the main municipal problem of the post-war years. The growth of the population, and the stoppage of building by private enterprise of houses to let led to serious overcrowding. In addition, there was the problem of insanitary areas. The position may be made clear if I give a few figures. Up to the end of September, 1938, the Town Council completed under the various Housing Acts 5,632 houses, as well as 214 provided in converted buildings. It is estimated that 992 houses will be completed during the current year. The new houses are situated mainly in the outlying parts of the city—Torry, Hilton, Woodside, Middlefield, Seaton, and Ruthrieston. The total capital expenditure amounts to £2,881,686. In insanitary areas 1,722 dwellings have already been dealt with, and it is estimated that 5,980 have still to be dealt with. Overcrowding has presented another problem. Since action was begun under the Housing (Scotland) Act 1925 almost 1,500 families, living in overcrowded conditions, have been properly rehoused. This figure includes an estimate of the decrowding of families by private proprietors, but there are still at least 8,000 families in the city living in overcrowded conditions. Of course, that does not necessarily mean that 8,000 new houses will have to be built to accommodate them. The vacated fit houses can be used either by persons overcrowded in a smaller number of rooms or by persons coming from unfit houses. Supplementing the action of the Town Council in regard to the housing problem there has been much activity by private builders.

It will be recognized that the communal task has not been completed when the new houses have been built. Roads have to be made and new schools built. Gas, electricity, water and sewerage



services, as well as transport, police, lighting, cleansing and other facilities have to be provided. We are creating new communities and it is greatly to be desired that all the equipment for a healthy and happy community life should be supplied. The new communities are a challenge to the churches, to the Library Committee, to the National Fitness Council.

In 1928 the wards of the city were re-arranged. Boundaries were altered and the number was increased from 11 to 12. The old St. Andrew's Ward was absorbed by its neighbours, and Holburn and Gilcomston Wards were carved out principally from the old Rubislaw, Ruthrieston, and Ferryhill Wards. The number of voters in each ward was thus made more uniform, and, incidentally, the membership of the Town Council was enlarged from 34 to 37. It may be noted that the public work which a Councillor is expected to carry out has been greatly increased in recent years. Under the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1929 the old Parish Council was abolished and its place taken by the Public Assistance Committee of the Town Council, and the *ad hoc* Education Authority has been replaced by the Education Committee of the Town Council.

The re-planning of certain parts of the city and the housing developments have involved the construction of many new streets. Anderson Drive, popularly known as the Ring Road, was a post-war undertaking, aided by substantial government grants in relief of unemployment. This is a by-pass, running from the Bridge of Dee to Great Northern Road, a distance of nearly four miles. Great Western Road has remained unchanged for many years, but now a new Great Southern Road is being built, with twin carriage-ways, broad pavements and central reservation. It runs from the Holburn Street end of Fonthill Road to the new bridge over the Dee, connecting Kincorth with the mother city on the north bank of the river. The construction of this bridge was an essential preliminary to the development of the Kincorth estate, and it was also necessary to relieve the strain on the old Bridge of Dee, projected by Bishop Elphinstone and built by Bishop Gavin Dunbar. The old bridge has borne the southern traffic of the city for four hundred years, but modern traffic conditions have become too severe for it, and as soon as the new bridge is completed its use will be restricted to light traffic. Great Southern Road will be continued on the south side of the river until it connects with the old south road at the old

bridge, and heavy traffic to and from the city will take this route. The new road to the Beach is also taking shape, after considerable delay which has been largely due to the procedure involved in the acquisition of the necessary property. The new housing areas involve the construction of a large number of new streets, and it is interesting to note that in many cases they have been given topical names.

The story of the Freedom Lands is not a creditable one in the history of Aberdeen. That patrimony was alienated by its guardians, the Town Council of the day, who began to feu it in 1551. We have lived to regret this policy. The estates which have been purchased in the years since the Great War are ringing the city with a belt of land belonging to the Town Council, with the result that development can be fully controlled. Beginning at the sea on the south the belt comprises Tullos, Kincorth, Hazlehead, Oldmill, Sheddocksley, Kepplehills, and Brimmond Hill. To the north, the Hilton and Rosehill estates have been acquired as well as Middlefield, Cummings Park, and Powis.

It may be of interest to put on record some particulars about these estates.

**TULLOS ESTATE**, which extends to 390 acres, was purchased in 1938, on behalf of the Common Good, for £13,000. One hundred and sixty acres of rough ground on the estate have already been transferred to the Links and Parks Department for £500, and housing and industrial development has been begun in other parts of the Estate.

**KINCORTH ESTATE**, extending to 632 acres, was purchased on behalf of the Common Good in 1928 at a cost of £45,000. The development will probably be one of the most outstanding achievements in local authority planning in Britain. It has been decided not to develop piecemeal by feuing to speculative builders, but to plan the development of 435·2 acres as a satellite town. The Town Council conducted a competition open to civil engineers and architects for the best lay-out design, the prize money amounting to £850.

**HAZLEHEAD ESTATE**, of 832 acres, was purchased on behalf of the Common Good in 1920 for £42,500. A large area was set aside as permanent pleasure grounds for the citizens. Eighteen hole and nine hole golf courses have been laid out. Almost 15 acres have been feued, producing an annual income of £538. The capital value of the feu-duties equals £10,760, which is a quarter of the purchase price. Under the Aberdeen Corporation Order 1934, a large part of the estate, consisting mainly of the 18 hole golf course, woods and policies, was transferred from the Common Good to the Links and Parks Department for £31,155. There is still a value of £24,604 remaining in the Common Good. The benefit to the citizens of the woods and policies at Hazlehead cannot be measured in terms of money.

SHEDDOCKSLEY ESTATE, with an area of 520 acres, was purchased in 1938, on behalf of the Common Good, for £12,500.

KEPPLERHILLS ESTATE, which extends to 860 acres, was purchased for the Common Good in 1937 for £6,300. The value of the estate is nearer £11,500, but the various farms were in such a bad state of repair that in effect an allowance of £5,000 was made on the purchase price. Building development is not anticipated for a good many years, and it is the intention of the Town Council to repair and put in good order the various farms on the estate. This work is already proceeding.

HILTON AND ROSEHILL ESTATES were purchased on behalf of the Common Good in 1925 for £29,530. Feu-duties, as at May 31, 1938, amounted to £2,566 per annum, equivalent at 20 years' purchase to £51,320. In addition, there was sold to the Housing, Parks, Water and Education Departments, ground to the value of £35,758. The value of unfeued land in the estate as at May 31, 1938 was £9,414, so that the total value of the property is £96,492.

On the MIDDLEFIELD ESTATE, an area of ground extending to 84·85 acres was feued in 1935 for housing purposes. The annual feu-duty is £12 10s. an acre, which is equal to £1,060. The subjects lie to the west of Anderson Drive North and south of Great Northern Road, and have a value of approximately £21,000.

CUMMINGS PARK—an area of land made up as follows—was acquired in 1937 on behalf of the Common Good :—

(a) Cummings Park . . . . .	51·569 acres.
(b) Granitehill . . . . .	20·344 „
(c) Cairnfield . . . . .	17·772 „
(d) Other Lands . . . . .	7·90 „
	97·585 acres.

The purchase price, at £250 per acre, was £24,400. The subjects adjoin those at Middlefield, Cairnery, Hilton and Rosehill, at present owned by the Council.

POWIS.—For the development of a housing scheme, the erection of a school fronting St. Machar Drive, and the construction of a sports field and public park fronting St. Machar Drive, it was arranged in 1936 to feu the estate of Powis. It was also decided to acquire from the University certain areas of ground in King Street, Regent Walk East, St. Machar Drive and fronting a new road to be constructed to extend from Bedford Road to St. Machar Drive. The total area is 33·2941 acres, and the annual feu-duty £565, equivalent to a capital value of £11,300. In addition, there was conveyed from the University two areas of ground extending to 1·479 and 1·533 acres in the same vicinity at a purchase price of £410 and £170.

Brimmond Hill was never alienated by the Town Council, but they granted certain grazing and similar rights there over to adjoining feuars. Power to extinguish these rights are contained in the Aberdeen Corporation (General Powers) Order, at present before Parliament.

Changed world conditions have had a marked effect on the trade and industry of Aberdeen. We still carry on a varied foreign trade, with regular sailings between Aberdeen and Rotterdam, Hamburg, Antwerp, Bremen, and Boston and New York, as well as Canadian ports. From the continent come extensive cargoes of timber, rough granite, flax, wood pulp and carbide of calcium. There is a seasonal trade with Archangel, and esparto grass and other cargoes come from North Africa and Spain.

The old staple industries of Aberdeen, however, are granite and fish. Both have passed through great vicissitudes. Markets have been lost, competition has grown, even taste has changed, and yet both industries contribute greatly, and are indeed essential to the prosperity of the city. In 1902 "the harvest of the sea" realised £805,000. In 1937 the figure was £1,719,618. Box-making and paper-making of all kinds (including photographic paper and envelopes) have been developed. The jute works were allowed to disappear, but the enterprise of public-spirited citizens has maintained the old Broadford Works, and the production of hosiery and the manufacture of soap have been carried on successfully in face of great difficulties. The famous Grandholm Woollen Works were sold a few years ago to Salts (Saltaire), but are still carried on under the old firm name of J. & J. Crombie and are producing the world-famous tweeds.

Of the shipbuilding firms of 40 years ago two are still in existence, Alexander Hall & Company, Ltd., and Hall, Russell & Company, Ltd. John Duthie & Sons ceased to exist in 1907. The Duthie Shipbuilding Company started at Torry in 1904 and continued until 1925, when the yard was closed down. Hall, Russell & Company, established in 1864, is still engaged in shipbuilding, and Alexander Hall & Company have specialised recently in building dredgers and tugs. John Lewis & Sons, Ltd., a comparatively new company, started on the south side of the Dee at Torry, and has constructed a number of vessels for home and foreign owners. Four boom defence vessels for the Admiralty have lately been launched from Aberdeen yards. During the war years a firm on the Dee, near Victoria Bridge, successfully constructed and launched two concrete barges for English owners.

Reference has already been made to the disappearance of local businesses by purchase or amalgamation. This process has affected

our Banks and Railways. In 1907 the North of Scotland Bank amalgamated with the Town and County Bank, and some years later the amalgamated bank was affiliated with the Midland Bank, one of the "Big Five." The Aberdeen Savings Bank, which showed a tenfold increase in deposits between 1851 and 1902, has repeated the process in the succeeding years. The deposits to-day amount to £12,295,695 19s. 8d., a remarkable proof of the hold obtained by habits of thrift.

The Caledonian, North British and Great North of Scotland Railway Companies served Aberdeen until, soon after the war, the big railway amalgamations took place, and these companies were absorbed by the L.M.S. and L.N.E. Railway Companies. Road transport, both for passengers and goods, has seriously affected the railway companies, but this has led to improvements in railway services. Eight express passenger trains, with through coaches, run daily (Sunday excepted) in each direction between Aberdeen and London, with connections to all the important towns in Britain, and there are over twenty express passenger trains daily (Sunday excepted) between Aberdeen and Edinburgh and Glasgow, the time of the journey, in some cases, having been cut down to three hours.

Since 1920 road transport to and from Aberdeen has made great progress. In addition to the city and suburban passenger services, buses run to all parts of Aberdeenshire and neighbouring counties and, on long-distance routes, to Elgin and Inverness, Dundee, Perth, Edinburgh, and Glasgow. Goods haulage by road has also expanded greatly. Some sixty carriers operate regularly on routes radiating from the city, and certain firms provide long-distance services to London and intermediate towns. In this transition of haulage from the manual stage to the motor age, it is gratifying to remember that one local organisation, still active in the community, has graduated from man power, through horse power, to motor power, and now possesses a fleet of up-to-date motor vehicles of all descriptions. This is the ancient Shore Porters' Society, first mentioned in the minutes of the Town Council of June 22, 1498.

Flying is a development of the Twentieth Century. I can remember the thrill that was caused in 1909 when the news came that Bleriot had flown the Channel. The first aviation meeting at Aberdeen was on the Links in August, 1912. Now there are aerodromes at Dyce and Kintore, with regular passenger and mail services

as far as Shetland and also to the South, though meantime the link between Aberdeen and Perth has been broken. Pioneer flights have also been made between Aberdeen and Stavanger.

The health of the people depends to a very large extent on the measures taken by their municipal administrators. Good water and sewerage systems are essential. In regard to water, Aberdeen has remained faithful to the Dee, the Bill advocating the Avon Scheme having been thrown out by the House of Lords in 1910. The cost of the old waterworks, £334,029, was paid off in 1921, and the capital expenditure on new works is £987,481.

A new trunk sewer is meantime being built on the south and west sides of the city, the estimated cost of which is £450,000, and the completion of the main drainage scheme will raise that figure to £700,000. In 1902 the revenue expenditure on sewerage was £14,000. It is now £33,000. Cleansing services have increased in the same period from £17,000 to £60,000, and Public Health services from £11,000 to £92,000.

A separate paper would be necessary to do justice to this aspect of my subject, and here I can refer only to one or two points.

The regional medical services and the Joint Hospital scheme at Foresterhill have done much to cope with disease. The public health services in the North-East of Scotland are organized on a regional basis, the constituent local authorities being the Town Council of Aberdeen and the County Councils of Aberdeen and Kincardine, with one Chief Medical Officer—Dr. H. J. Rae—for the whole region. There are regional specialists for the principal subjects included in the service—tuberculosis, schools, mother and child welfare and bacteriology. Institutional treatment for the more serious cases is provided in the city institutions. Since 1928 the Council have run a general hospital at Woodend, and, in this development, they anticipated the provisions of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1929. The area has given a lead to the country in organising public health services on a regional basis.

The Joint Hospital scheme was organized in the immediate post-war years to supply the urgent need, in Aberdeen, for largely increased hospital accommodation of the most modern type to meet the requirements of the city and the North of Scotland. The Governing Body of the Royal Aberdeen Hospital for Sick Children had already secured a site on which to build a new hospital, and

had raised sufficient funds to justify a commencement being made with its erection. Although the number of beds had been increased since the War to 366, the Infirmary had a large waiting list; there was urgent need for expansion of certain special departments, and the accommodation for nurses was entirely inadequate. Other medical institutions in the city were equally in need of enlarged and up-to-date accommodation. The pressing needs of these hospitals were brought before the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society by the late Professor Matthew Hay, and, in April, 1920, were submitted by Professor (later Sir) Ashley Mackintosh, President of the Aberdeen Medico-Chirurgical Society, to a conference of representatives of the Society, the Governing Bodies of the Voluntary Hospitals, the Town Council, and the University Court, under the presidency of the Lord Provost, Mr. (later Sir) William Meff. The attention of the conference was directed to the inadequacy of the existing hospital accommodation, and to the opportunity presented by the clamant needs of the Infirmary and the Sick Children's Hospital for considering the desirability of securing a common site, on the outskirts of the town, on which to build new hospitals and, eventually, to concentrate the whole hospital system of the city, including certain University departments most closely associated with clinical work. In 1923 a magnificent site on the outskirts of the city, adjacent to the Royal Mental Hospital, and extending to about 100 acres, belonging to the Town, was set aside for the Joint Hospitals Scheme—the portion required for a new Infirmary being gifted for that purpose. The first unit of the Joint Hospitals Scheme to be erected on the site, the Royal Aberdeen Hospital for Sick Children, was completed in 1928 with accommodation for 134 patients and was opened in January, 1929 by the Rt. Hon. Annie, Viscountess Cowdray. Meantime steps were being taken to raise the funds for a new Royal Infirmary, and the Lord Provost, Mr. (afterwards Sir) Andrew Lewis issued a public appeal which, in two years, brought in £410,000. Of this sum about £350,000 was available for the new Infirmary. The foundation stone was laid by His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales in August, 1928, and during the next eight years construction work proceeded until in September, 1936, the magnificently equipped buildings, with accommodation for 500 patients, were opened by His Royal Highness the Duke of York. The total cost was £525,000. Of this sum the building fund, with

accrued interest, provided £425,000 and the balance of £100,000 was raised in a year, in response to a further public appeal inaugurated in June, 1906, by Lord Provost Watt. The third unit in the Joint Hospital scheme was the Maternity Hospital, opened in October, 1907, by Mrs. J. A. Ross, and to this an ante-natal annexe is to be added by the Town Council.

From 1856 to 1869 the death rate of Aberdeen was 24·5. In 1901 it had fallen to 18·2. Sir Edwin Chadwick argued many years before the end of the 19th century that it should come down to about 14, on which Mr. Watt remarked that there is no reason to doubt that further progress is practicable. The figure for 1907 is 15 per 1,000, and in the monthly return for September, 1938, it is as low as 10·6.

The lead given by Aberdeen in the direction of social reform was referred to in Mr. Watt's paper. In many respects that lead has been maintained. The city has been the pioneer in Scotland, through its Education Committee, in providing facilities for juvenile organisations. It is the first large city to set up the new Juvenile Court, and it also has its Probation Committee. Oakbank Reformatory has become an Approved School and extensive alterations are being carried out to adapt the buildings to modern ideas. The Club movement has made notable progress with the establishing of the Lads' Club in the Gallowgate, with its satellite at Woodside, and St. Katharine's Club for Girls, in Langcrae. The Shiprow Tavern, too, is another social experiment of great promise and performance. The national youth organisations for boys and girls are all well supported in Aberdeen. They are served by keen bodies of officers.

The ecclesiastical situation in Aberdeen has undergone a great change in this century. If separation was the keynote of the 19th century, union was that of the 20th century. The Free and U.P. Churches were united at the opening of the century and this led to the famous Churches Case and the subsequent legislation. Then in 1929 the Church of Scotland and the U.P. Church of Scotland were united. In each case a small minority was left.

In 1900 there were 85 places of worship. A number of these have disappeared or have been amalgamated, and the old High Church has migrated to a fine new building in Hilton. Eight new congregations appear to have been formed, and there are now 82 places of worship in the city. Improvements have been carried out



and new halls built. Further restorations at the University Chapel have brought that ancient edifice back to its pristine splendour.

## PLACES OF WORSHIP.

	1851	1903	New Since	
			1903	1938
Church of Scotland . . . .	11	22	} 1	49
Free Church . . . . .	15	33		
U.P. Church . . . . .	5			
Episcopalian . . . . .	4	8	2	10
Roman Catholic . . . . .	1	3	2	5
Congregational and E.U. . . .	5	8	—	5
Baptist . . . . .	3	4	—	3
United Free . . . . .	—	—	2	2
Others . . . . .	5	7	1	8
	<u>49</u>	<u>85</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>82</u>

Aberdeen retains its importance as an educational centre. At the beginning of the century the old School Board was flourishing. The Education (Scotland) Act 1918 abolished it and substituted the Education Authority, with proportional representation, effected by the single transferable vote. Twelve years later the whole functions of the Authority were transferred to the Town Council, which acts through its Education Committee. To this Committee certain "external" members are appointed, and under the Administrative Scheme certain functions are delegated to the Committee, the Council retaining power to give directions to the Committee on any matters of general finance or important questions of principle.

In 1903 there were 25 free public elementary schools and one fee-paying school (Ashley Road). Now there are 27 Primary, 7 Intermediate, 2 Special, and 2 Nursery Schools, and, in addition, 3 Secondary Schools, with an average attendance of 24,151 pupils, as compared with 24,558 pupils in 1936-37, this decline being, of course, a reflection of the fall in the birth rate. The teaching staff numbers 913, and the non-teaching staff, 323. The revenue for the last full year was £260,427, most of which was derived from Government Grants, and the expenditure was £453,693. A heavy building programme is in hand. Old schools are being modernised and new schools have to be built in the new housing areas. It is little wonder,

therefore, that the capital expenditure on education amounts to the enormous figure of £1,264,004.

The Grammar School, which has occupied its present building since 1863, is to have an extensive reconstruction scheme carried out. Robert Gordon's Colleges now include the Technical College. The secondary school has been greatly developed, and with hall, swimming pool, gymnasium, and library is admirably equipped. The old denominational training colleges have been replaced by the Training Centre, with its extensive buildings in the centre of the city and its hostels at Hilton. The University has seen many important changes, both at King's College and Marischal College. At the beginning of the century, the new buildings at Marischal College, with the stately granite front, facing what is to become the new city square, were opened by His Majesty King Edward VII. Since then there have been great changes. The medical school has been moved to Foresterhill, and the vacated accommodation has been used for the expansion of other departments. Through the union of the churches, the Divinity School has been extended by the inclusion of what is now called Christ's College, formerly the Free Church College at Alford Place. A new students' union has been equipped in premises adjacent to Marischal College. At King's College the Elphinstone Hall has been built and several lecture rooms. This century has seen the founding of ten Chairs. Extensive provision has been made for the recreative side of student life, but Aberdeen remains the only Scottish University in which there is no hostel accommodation. The North of Scotland Agricultural College, the Rowett Research Institute, the Macaulay Institute for Soil Research (with which the Forestry Commission is co-operating), the Torry Research Station of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and the Marine Laboratory of the Scottish Fishery Board have all been established in recent years and have put Aberdeen in the forefront as a research centre.

In the present century Aberdeen has fully maintained its reputation as an attractive city in which to dwell. Many more open spaces have been provided, and the provisions of the Town Planning Scheme have ensured ample open space in the new housing areas, with a pleasing lay-out of buildings. The beautiful policies of Hazlehead Estate are now a permanent public possession, and an attractive haunt is the lovely little dell at Johnston Gardens. Parks and

Sports Centres covered 656 acres, children's playgrounds 58 acres, and golf courses, football pitches, school playfields, and other open spaces, including the Links, extend to 1,019 acres.

Facilities for games have been greatly extended. Ornamental plots have been laid out in the latest housing schemes, and it should be noted that the great majority of municipal tenants take a keen interest in their little gardens. Tree planting in the streets has been steadily carried out. Plans have been prepared for the laying out of a modern pleasure ground at the Bay of Nigg. Much money has been spent at the Beach to render it attractive to visitors, and new up-town baths are being built at a cost of nearly £90,000. The Art Gallery has been enriched by the addition of the Sculpture Gallery and the Regional Museum, as well as the War Memorial and the Cowdray Hall.

The cinema was practically unknown to the last generation. Now there are nineteen cinemas and theatres in the city, and three large cinemas are being erected. When these are completed, and when the Music Hall, now the property of the Town Council, is taken into account, there will be seating accommodation for 32,453 persons.

The great process of "municipalisation" was commented on by Mr. Watt, who referred to such questionable speculations as a municipal lodging-house and municipal dwellings-houses. How times have changed! The "Model" Lodging House has been in use all these years, and last year it cost the ratepayers over £1,300. On municipal houses we have spent £2,874,185. To that extent has this questionable speculation developed.

Municipalisation has been to a large extent accepted, but the growing control of the central government has not yet fully commended itself to our municipal authorities.

In 1903 the capital expenditure by public boards in Aberdeen since 1862 exceeded three millions. In 1938 the figure is £13,274,048 15s. 3d. The details are shown in the following table:—

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE TO MAY 31, 1938.

RATING ACCOUNTS—				
Police	.	.	.	£3,324 8 6
Cleansing	.	.	.	90,840 1 6
Fire Prevention	.	.	.	9,695 16 1
Bathing Station	.	.	.	15,743 17 7

Rating Accounts—*continued.*

Justice Mills Bathing Pond . . . . .	£19,741	10	9
Beach Entertainment Buildings . . . . .	61,086	18	3
Extension and Improvement of Esplanade . . . . .	108,156	9	10
Public Parks . . . . .	142,468	9	8
Public Library . . . . .	7,007	5	9
Weights and Measures . . . . .	216	8	6
Road Improvements . . . . .	698,966	8	11
City Improvements, 1883 . . . . .	139,144	7	5
Do. 1904 . . . . .	97,871	1	0
Sewerage . . . . .	675,011	17	8
Corporation Lodging-House . . . . .	18,363	12	4
Workmen's Dwellings . . . . .	18,504	10	3
Education . . . . .	1,264,004	3	0
Public Assistance . . . . .	148,024	19	3
Public Health . . . . .	200,030	6	6
Lunacy and Mental Deficiency . . . . .	203,536	0	10
Public Weighbridges . . . . .	745	0	0
Burgh Court House and Police Buildings . . . . .	21,777	11	10
City Halls . . . . .	43,560	5	0
City Churches . . . . .	25,000	0	0
Municipal Buildings—Alterations . . . . .	11,044	12	10
Aberdeen Corporation Act, 1934 (Ex- tension of City Boundary) . . . . .	129,382	9	3
	<hr/>		
	£4,153,248	12	6

## REVENUE-PRODUCING UNDERTAKINGS—

Water (not including expenditure on the old Waterworks of £334,029 6s. 5d. finally paid off in 1921) . . . . .	991,942	3	10
Gas Undertaking . . . . .	773,819	0	0
Electricity Undertaking . . . . .	2,260,616	0	0
Transport Undertaking . . . . .	864,190	0	0
Housing . . . . .	2,874,185	18	11
	<hr/>		
	£7,764,753	2	9

## COMMON GOOD—

Fish Market . . . . .	74,262	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£11,992,263	15	3

## HARBOUR BOARD—

	1,281,785	0	0
	<hr/>		
	£13,274,048	15	3

The total cost of local administration in 1903 was £260,000—  
a burden upon the rates and taxes of £700 a day. Now the total

cost is £1,119,000, of which sum £650,000 comes from the rates and £469,000 from grants, and the daily burden is £3,100. For commodities sold—gas, electricity, and tramway transport—the Town Council received in 1902, £174,000. Now gas produces £268,000, electricity £281,000, and transport £326,000 (trams, £158,000; buses, £168,000)—a total of £875,000, or five times as much as a generation ago. In addition, there is a housing revenue of £143,800, as against an expenditure from the rates of £14,000.

Of the thirteen millions of capital outlay, more than seven millions remain as debt. Including the debt of the Common Good—which, however, is well covered by the surplus assets, valued at £207,000—the debt of the city is the large sum of £7,436,000. The details are as follows, with the corresponding figures for 1901-2 :—

## DEBT OF ABERDEEN.

	1901-2	1937-8
TOWN COUNCIL—		
Municipal Department ( <i>i.e.</i> , Common Good) . . . . .	£203,000	£393,000
Rating (including Water) . . . . .	560,000	2,464,000
Gas . . . . .	248,000	137,000
Electricity . . . . .	158,000	1,003,000
Transport . . . . .	230,000	240,000
Housing . . . . .	—	2,498,000
Total . . . . .	£1,399,000	£6,735,000
HARBOUR BOARD . . . . .	486,000	701,000
SCHOOL BOARD . . . . .	281,000	—
PARISH COUNCIL . . . . .	220,000	—
	£2,366,000	£7,436,000

Excluding the Harbour, the debt per head of population is £37.

In conclusion, reference ought to be made to the steps that are being taken to consolidate the City Acts—over 30 in all, extending from 1862 to 1936. Many of them are out of print and parts of many of them have been repealed or altered by later legislation. So it was decided to consolidate and modernize all this local legislation in four stages, each dealing with a distinct aspect of local administration. Three Provisional Orders have now been enacted, and the fourth and last is being prepared for submission to Parliament next session. When that receives the Royal Assent, Aberdeen will have

a complete, up-to-date and unambiguous code, embracing all the special powers conferred on the city by Parliament.

This is a very brief survey of Aberdeen in the 20th century. It shows developments which are beyond the imagination of the citizens of the closing years of the 19th century. These developments have done much for the citizens, and I think to-day the closing words of the survey of 1903 are as applicable as they were when they were written—"the average conditions of life in Aberdeen are far better than they were half a century ago," and "as a community we are healthier, and wealthier—in a wider sense than that of money—it is to be hoped we are also wiser than our predecessors."